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Allen Dulles' Expected Head Roll

When a federal official comes before the public firing line for a long period his head may, in due time, roll. Former Agriculture Secretary Ezra Benson was one who managed to stick, but public criticism undoubtedly has helped chop off others, as for example former Defense Secretary Charles Wilson.

It would be hard to assess, though, the extent to which public chagrin with Allen Dulles contributes to his expected departure from the Central Intelligence Agency. Competent sources say he was ticketed out of the administration as a matter of form before the Cuban fiasco.

A Republican, Mr. Dulles reportedly was held over by President Kennedy to preserve the image of CIA as non-political. The plan presumably was also to give the White House more shopping time for a successor.

Certainly there were wrong estimates of the Cuban situation by CIA. Thought that half-a-million Cubans would rise against the Castro government with the first hint of counter-revolution was based on total absence

of ideological understanding. The whole operation, with its non-CIA participants, must rank as one of history's worst American failures.

Allen Dulles, surely responsible in part, became a convenient scapegoat. He has indeed been before the public firing line for a long time. But when the CIA head rolls it may well be the execution of a plan made before the nation changed commanders-in-chief. Only the timing may have been arranged, in some measure, by the public response to Cuba.—R. W.